

ANGUS REID POLITICAL WATCH – JULY 2008

Conservatives Have Five-Point Lead, as NDP Drops to 17%

The Greens are the only political party to improve from their 2006 federal election numbers.

[VANCOUVER – Aug. 4, 2008] - After a week that featured its share of political saber-rattling from the two main federal leaders, the governing Conservatives hold the upper hand over the Liberals, but none of the parties represented in the House of Commons matches the support they garnered when the last federal ballot took place, according to an Angus Reid Strategies poll.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,007 adults, 35 per cent of decided voters say they will cast a ballot for the Tories in the next federal election, up two points since June. Support for the Conservative Party is below its share of the actual vote in the January 2006 ballot (36.3%).

The Liberal Party is second with 30 per cent (=), exactly the same as its 2006 election total (30.2%). The New Democratic Party (NDP) is third with 17 per cent (-2), followed by the Bloc Québécois with nine per cent (=), and the Green Party with eight per cent (+1).

The provincial breakdown shows the Tories and Grits virtually tied in Ontario (40% to 39%), with the NDP falling to 12 per cent. In Quebec, the Bloc is still first with 35 per cent, with the Conservatives (21%) and the Liberals (20%) fighting for second place.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Voting Intention: Con. 35%, Lib. 30%, NDP 17%, BQ 9%, Grn. 8%**
- **Approval Ratings: Harper 32%, Dion 13%**
- **Preferred Prime Minister: Harper 36%, Dion 14%, Neither 39%**
- **Momentum Score: Harper -21, Dion -19**
- **49% do not want the opposition to force an early election**
- **Harper defeats Dion on seven qualities and characteristics**

Full topline results are at the end of this release

From July 29 to July 30, 2008 Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of 1,007 adult Canadians. The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 3.1 %, 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

The Tories remain dominant in Alberta (58%) and have the support of one-third of respondents (34%) in British Columbia. The gender breakdown shows no significant changes since June. Two-in-five men would vote for the Tories (41%), with the Grits (26%) and the NDP (15%) lagging behind. Among women, the Liberals hold the advantage (35%), followed by the Conservatives (27%) and the NDP (23%).

Approval Ratings, Momentum and Preferred Prime Minister

The approval rating for Stephen Harper (32%) remained unchanged since June, while Stéphane Dion gained one point (13%). While the two main federal party leaders keep a negative momentum score, Dion fared slightly better than Harper.

The Conservative leader's momentum score for the month of July is -21 (10% of respondents say their opinion of Harper has improved, while 31% say it has worsened). The Prime Minister's negative momentum surpassed the 20-point mark for the third time this year.

The Grit leader's momentum score for the month of July is -19 (12% of respondents say their opinion of Dion has improved, while 31% say it has worsened). Dion had not reached double-digits in the "improved" category since February.

The survey also gauged the approval ratings for three other federal party leaders. Just over a quarter of Canadians (27%, -3) provide a positive assessment of the job Jack Layton is doing as leader of the NDP. The approval rating for Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe stands at 40 per cent (+11) in Quebec. Green Party leader Elizabeth May gets good marks from 20 per cent of respondents in Canada (+3), but more than half (56%) cannot provide an assessment of her performance.

As has been the case throughout 2008, Canadians are not enthused by either of the two main federal party leaders. More than a third of respondents (36%, -1) prefer Harper as Prime Minister, while only 14 per cent (+4) favour Dion. Still, two-in-five Canadians (39%, =) pick neither man for the job. Harper remains unable to reach the 41 per cent mark he garnered in March 2007, while Dion stands below his all-time high of 17 per cent in February 2008.

Qualities and Characteristics: Harper vs. Dion

In the poll, respondents were provided with nine qualities and characteristics usually associated with political leaders, and asked to state whether each of them applied to Canada's two main federal party leaders. Harper retains a large lead over Dion as being a strong and decisive leader (46% to 9%), managing the economy effectively (40% to 14%), understanding complex issues (41% to 26%), and inspiring confidence (30% to 11%).

However, a third of respondents (32%) think the current prime minister understands the problems of Canadians (23% for Dion), and 27 per cent say Harper generally agrees with them on issues they care about (23% for Dion). When Canadians are asked to assess if the two politicians have a vision for Canada's future, Harper holds a seven-point lead over Dion (43% to 36%).

The Liberal leader has tied Harper on one indicator: being honest and trustworthy (32% for both). Dion leads Harper as a politician who cares about the environment (49% for Dion, 24% for Harper).

Minority Government and Early Election

The survey shows a small shift on the way Canadians relate to the administration of Stephen Harper. One-in-five respondents (22%, +1) believe the Conservative government has performed well and deserves a majority in the House of Commons, while 26 per cent (-3) think the Tories have handled matters adequately and deserve to stay in office with a minority. More than a third of Canadians (37%, +4) say the Harper administration has performed poorly and does not deserve to form a government after the next election.

When asked whether the opposition parties should try to topple the Conservative minority government, 49 per cent of respondents disagree with forcing an early federal election (-3), while 30 per cent (+1) would welcome a nationwide ballot.

Top Issue Facing Canada

When asked about the most important issue facing the country, Canadians rank the economy (21%) as their main concern, followed by the environment (20%) and health care (19%).

Respondents were also given a list of ten issues and asked which one would be the most important if an early federal election were to take place this year. Health care, the national economy and the environment are tied for first place (all with 18%), followed by government accountability with 11 per cent.

Female respondents are more prone to think about health care (24%) as an electoral issue than male respondents (12%), while men are more worried about the environment (21%) than women (16%).

Only 32 per cent of respondents (-2) think Canada is headed in the right track, while 40 per cent (+7) believe the country is off on the wrong track.

The Angus Reid Political Watch is released monthly by Angus Reid Strategies, and includes the following questions:

- Federal Voting Intention
- Approval Rating and Momentum Score for the Prime Minister
- Approval Rating and Momentum Score for the Opposition Leader
- Preferred Prime Minister
- Top Issue Facing Canada
- Right Track / Wrong Track

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Voting Intention – Conservatives Have Five-Point Lead

If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	JUL 2008	JUN 2008	MAY 2008	APR 2008	MAR 28, 2008	MAR 2, 2008	2006 Election
Conservative	35%	33%	34%	33%	36%	34%	36.3%
Liberal	30%	30%	27%	30%	26%	28%	30.2%
New Democratic Party	17%	19%	18%	20%	18%	18%	17.5%
Bloc Québécois	9%	9%	11%	8%	9%	10%	10.5%
Green	8%	7%	8%	8%	9%	9%	4.5%
Other	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1.0%

Voting Intention – Conservatives Have Five-Point Lead

If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency?

	Latest	Provincial Breakdown					
	JUL 2008	BC	Alta.	Prai.	Ont.	Que.	Atl.
Conservative	35%	34%	58%	35%	39%	21%	32%
Liberal	30%	25%	21%	33%	40%	20%	34%
New Democratic Party	17%	29%	15%	24%	12%	15%	32%
Bloc Québécois	9%	--	--	--	--	35%	--
Green	8%	10%	6%	8%	8%	9%	1%
Other	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%

Stephen Harper's approval rating at 32%

Do you approve or disapprove of Stephen Harper's performance as Prime Minister?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	JUL 2008	JUN 2008	MAY 2008	APR 2008	MAR 2008	FEB 2008	DEC 2007
Approve	32%	32%	32%	33%	33%	34%	30%
Disapprove	46%	42%	42%	40%	44%	46%	45%
Not sure	22%	26%	26%	27%	23%	19%	25%

Stephen Harper's momentum score at -21

Over the course of the past month, would you say your opinion of Stephen Harper has improved, stayed the same, or worsened?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	JUL 2008	JUN 2008	MAY 2008	APR 2008	MAR 2008	FEB 2008	DEC 2007
Improved	10%	10%	8%	9%	11%	10%	11%
Stayed the same	54%	54%	53%	52%	56%	55%	51%
Worsened	31%	29%	29%	33%	27%	28%	31%
Not sure	5%	7%	9%	6%	5%	7%	7%
Momentum Score	-21	-19	-21	-24	-16	-18	-20

Stéphane Dion's approval rating at 13%

Do you approve or disapprove of Stéphane Dion's performance as leader of the opposition?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	JUL 2008	JUN 2008	MAY 2008	APR 2008	MAR 2008	FEB 2008	DEC 2007
Approve	13%	12%	10%	11%	11%	17%	14%
Disapprove	58%	56%	60%	56%	57%	50%	51%
Not sure	30%	33%	30%	33%	32%	33%	35%

Stéphane Dion's momentum score at -19

Over the course of the past month, would you say your opinion of Stéphane Dion has improved, stayed the same, or worsened?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	JUL 2008	JUN 2008	MAY 2008	APR 2008	MAR 2008	FEB 2008	DEC 2007
Improved	12%	9%	6%	7%	4%	13%	10%
Stayed the same	47%	44%	51%	51%	48%	50%	53%
Worsened	31%	35%	28%	30%	36%	27%	24%
Not sure	10%	12%	14%	12%	12%	10%	13%
Momentum Score	-19	-26	-21	-23	-32	-14	-14

Approval for Other Party Leaders

Do you approve or disapprove of Jack Layton's performance as leader of the NDP?
Do you approve or disapprove of Gilles Duceppe's performance as leader of the Bloc Québécois?
Do you approve or disapprove of Elizabeth May's performance as leader of the Green Party?

	Approve	Disapprove	Not sure
Jack Layton	27% (-3)	36% (+3)	37% (=)
Gilles Duceppe [National Sample]	18% (+5)	45% (+1)	38% (-5)
Gilles Duceppe [Quebec Only]	40% (+11)	34% (-10)	26% (-1)
Elizabeth May	20% (+3)	24% (+2)	56% (-5)

Qualities and Characteristics

Thinking about the following qualities and characteristics, please say whether you think they apply to Stephen Harper? / Stéphane Dion?

	Stephen Harper	Stéphane Dion
Is a strong and decisive leader	46%	9%
Has a vision for Canada's future	43%	36%
Understands complex issues	41%	26%
Can manage the economy effectively	40%	14%
Is honest and trustworthy	32%	32%
Understands the problems of Canadians	32%	23%
Inspires confidence	30%	11%
Generally agrees with you on issues you care about	27%	23%
Cares about the environment	24%	49%

The Conservative Minority Government

Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view?

	JUL 2008	JUN 2008
The Conservative government has performed well, and deserves a majority in the House of Commons	22%	21%
The Conservative government has performed adequately, and deserves to stay in office with a minority	26%	29%
The Conservative government has performed poorly, and does not deserve to form a government after the next election	37%	33%
Not sure	15%	16%

Appetite for an early election

Do you think the opposition parties should try to topple the Conservative minority government and force an early federal election?

	JUL 2008	JUN 2008
Yes	30%	29%
No	49%	52%
Not sure	20%	19%

Preferred Prime Minister – Neither

Which of these two leaders would make the best Prime Minister of Canada?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	JUL 2008	JUN 2008	MAY 2008	APR 2008	MAR 2008	FEB 2008	DEC 2007
Stephen Harper	36%	37%	33%	37%	36%	34%	33%
Stéphane Dion	14%	10%	11%	10%	9%	17%	12%
Neither	39%	39%	44%	41%	42%	37%	41%
Not sure	12%	14%	12%	12%	13%	11%	14%

Canada on the right track for 32%

Overall, do you think Canada is headed in the right track, or the wrong track?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	JUL 2008	JUN 2008	MAY 2008	APR 2008	MAR 2008	FEB 2008	DEC 2007
Right track	32%	34%	32%	33%	43%	40%	38%
Wrong track	40%	33%	42%	37%	29%	34%	32%
Not sure	28%	34%	26%	30%	28%	26%	30%

Health Care, Environment and Economy are top issues

Q. What do you think is the most important issue facing Canada today?

	JUL 2008	JUN 2008	MAY 2008
Economy	21%	19%	15%
Environment	20%	19%	19%
Health Care	19%	22%	22%
Poverty	7%	8%	9%
Energy / Electricity	7%	8%	7%
Crime	6%	5%	5%
Tax relief	4%	5%	7%
Unemployment	4%	2%	2%
Ethics / Accountability	3%	5%	4%
Afghanistan	2%	2%	3%
Education	2%	1%	2%
Terrorism	2%	1%	1%
National Unity	1%	1%	1%
Or, some other issue	3%	3%	3%

Health Care, Economy and Environment are top electoral Issues

Q. If an early federal election were to take place this year, which one of the following issues would be the most important when you cast your vote?

	Total	Gender	
		Men	Women
Health Care	18%	12%	24%
The national economy	18%	20%	16%
The environment	18%	21%	16%
Government accountability	11%	11%	12%
Tax relief	10%	10%	10%
Leadership	7%	7%	7%
The mission in Afghanistan	4%	5%	3%
Financial help for cities	2%	2%	2%
Child care	3%	0%	5%
Senate reform	1%	2%	1%
Other	7%	9%	5%

Angus Reid Strategies is a full-service polling and market research firm which is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995.

Angus Reid Strategies, along with its sister company, Vision Critical, is now the largest Canadian-owned market research enterprise. In addition to its four offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices San Francisco, New York and London, England. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Strategies polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum online panel (www.angusreidforum.com), which is recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a randomized, widespread invitation approach and a triple opt-in screening procedure. The panel is maintained through state-of-the-art sampling techniques and frequent verifications of personal identity, contact information, and demographic characteristics. This premier online survey platform presents respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses.

Over the last year, Angus Reid has covered five elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes. <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=194>

More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF.WP.pdf>

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**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
www.angusreidstrategies.com**